

Pentecost B, 2018

Why are the Swiss watches gone? If in 1968 someone had asked which country would dominate watch-making in the 1990s, most people would have said Switzerland. This is because Switzerland had dominated the world of watch-making for the previous sixty years. They led the search for new ways to manufacture better and more durable watch parts. They developed the best waterproofing techniques. In fact, in 1968 the Swiss made 65% of all watches sold in the world, and laid claim to 90% of the profits. However, by 1980 in Switzerland, watchmakers had been laid off by the thousands and the Swiss controlled a paltry 10% of the watch market. Why? The Swiss had ignored an important new development, the Quartz Movement. Ironically a Swiss invented the Quartz movement, but it was rejected because it had no mainspring or knob. It was too much of a paradigm shift for them to embrace. It was too new and too strange. Today's text from Acts tells of a powerful paradigm shift in the people of God demanded by "God's deeds of power," the miraculous activities that accompanied the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles.

In yachting, no wind means no race! Rev. Alan Walker of Australia often tells about the race of the sailing yachts in which Australia finally defeated the USA for the prized America's Cup. For 132 years, the cup was kept and defended by the United States. Again, and again there were challenges for the cup, but each time it was retained by the USA. Finally, in 1983 Australia mounted a serious challenge. The event took place as scheduled, and after six races, the two yachts were deadlocked at three wins each. Now the whole world seemed to take notice. Australia was alive with anticipation. The sporting world was focused on the race. The day came for the final race. After more than 100 years, the United States was in danger of losing its very precious cup. Thousands of people came to watch the race. Television cameras were ready to beam the race by satellite around the world. The crews were ready. The boats were polished. The yachts pulled into place at the starting line. All was ready, but there was no race! There was not enough wind. In yachting, no wind means no race!" In the life of the Church, as in yachting, no wind, no race. Who would deny that the Church today lacks power, life, energy, excitement? The Church today needs the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Did you and Grandma ever get into any fights?" A little girl asked her grandfather, "Did you and Grandma ever get into any fights?" The grandfather replied: "We don't talk about it very often, but there was a time when we were not getting along very well. We seemed to be picking on each other a lot and finding all kinds of things to argue about and really getting on one another's nerves. Well, one day I came in from the garden and I heard a voice upstairs. I went to the stairs and heard your grandmother telling God what she could not bring herself to tell me." "Well, what did you do?" asked the grand-daughter. "I quietly walked up the stairs," he replied, "and knelt down beside her and told God my side of the story. And from that day to this, we have never had a problem which we couldn't resolve by talking it over with each other and with God." Do you think the Holy Spirit was active in that couples' marriage? There can be no doubt. Conflict will always remain part of every relationship. The fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control - will always remain critical for happy relationships with others.

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